



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/686,404	10/15/2003	Todd Snell	4012M	6833

7590

01/13/2006

S. Michael Bender
P.O. Box 530399
St. Petersburg, FL 33747

EXAMINER

WOOD, KIMBERLY T

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3632

DATE MAILED: 01/13/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/686,404

Applicant(s)

SNELL, TODD

Examiner

Kimberly T. Wood

Art Unit

3632

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 October 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 3632

This is an office action for serial number 10/686,404.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35

U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for a bottom support structure, does not reasonably provide enablement for a rain gutter support structure having a top portion. The specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make the invention commensurate in scope with these claims. The specification discloses a bottom-located support structure however the specification does not clearly disclose the bottom portion or top portion of the support structure which makes it almost impossible to determine where the top portion of the support structure would be located relative to the gutter cover engagement portion and the gutter engagement portion as disclosed by the specification.

Art Unit: 3632

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 15 recites the limitation "gutter engagement portion" in line 4. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. The applicant needs to insert either "first" or "second" before "gutter engagement portion".

Claim 5 recites the limitation "first gutter cover engagement portion" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

The claims have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112 for the above reasons. Please note that the Examiner may not have pointed out each and every example of indefiniteness. The applicant is required to review all the claim language to make sure the claimed invention is clear and definite.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

Art Unit: 3632

Claims 1-5, 7-13, and 16 are rejected, as best understood, under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Cobb 6,959,512 (serial number 10/458,562). Applicant is reminded that the gutter cover and gutter have not been claimed and therefore the claims are directed to the subcombination of the hanger apparatus. Cobb discloses a gutter support structure (near 50a), a first gutter engagement portion (14a), a gutter cover engagement portion (near 120), a second gutter engagement portion (near 49a and 54a), reinforcement means comprising transverse webs (85a, 86a, and 88a).

Claims 1-17 are rejected, as best understood, under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Morandin et al. (Morandin) 5,617,678. Applicant is reminded that the gutter cover and gutter have not been claimed and therefore the claims are directed to the subcombination of the hanger apparatus. Morandin discloses a gutter support structure (26), a first gutter engagement portion (30) being L-shaped, a gutter cover engagement portion (50, 24, and 52), a second gutter engagement portion (80, 81, 82, 38, 40 and 84,), reinforcement means (44 and 42).

Art Unit: 3632

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 6, 14, and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cobb 6,959,512 in view Morandin 5,617,678. Cobb discloses all of the limitations of the claimed invention except for the L-shaped gutter engagement portion and reinforcement means comprising a reinforcement central transverse web member. Morandin discloses the L-shaped gutter engagement portion (30) and reinforcement means (44 and 42). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to have modified Cobb to have included the L-shape to the gutter engagement portion and the reinforcement means as taught Morandin for the purpose of providing a better means of attaching the cover to the gutter and for providing a stronger e apparatus.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed September 29, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The applicant argues that the support structure is one-piece structure including the first and second gutter engagement portion, and gutter cover engagement portions however; the claims only disclose that the support structure is one-piece and the first and second gutter engagement portions and gutter cover engagement portions extend from the support structure. This limitation would not lead the examiner to believe that in the broadest sense that the first, and second gutter engagement portion, and gutter cover engagement portions do not have to be a part of the one-piece support structure but that the support structure is one-piece and that the first, and second gutter engagement portion, and gutter cover engagement portions could be attachments to the one-piece support structure as long as they extend from the support structure as clearly disclosed by Morandin et al. 5,617,678.

In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., gutter or roof-mounted gutter cover) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light

Art Unit: 3632

of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

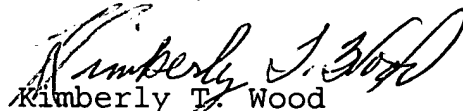
The prior art discloses conventional gutter cover hangers.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kimberly T. Wood whose telephone number is 571-272-6826. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 7:30am to 5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Olszewski can be reached on 571-272-6788. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3632

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Kimberly T. Wood
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3632

January 9, 2005